

Point Three



The Toc H magazine
July 1981 10p



A VISIT TO PANNIKAMPATTI

(pages 8-9)

Point Three

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Opinions expressed (including the editorial) are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Toc H Movement.

Point Three is available from the Toc H Publications Department, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Bucks HP22 6BT. (Telephone: 0296 623911).

Single copies 10p. Annual subscription: £1.20 including postage.



Toc H seeks to create friendship and understanding among people of all backgrounds and beliefs. Local group activities range from holidays for the handicapped and children's playschemes to arts festivals and even bird watching. Toc H is short for Talbot House — the soldiers' club in Belgium founded by the Reverend 'Tubby' Clayton in 1915. Today Toc H provides opportunities for people to test the relevance of practical Christianity and we welcome anyone who would like to give us a try.

Members accept a four fold commitment:

1. To build friendships across the barriers that divide man from man.
2. To give personal service.
3. To find their own convictions while always being willing to listen to the views of others.
4. To work for the Kingdom of God.

This magazine, which acts as a forum for ideas about Toc H and about the world in which we live, takes its title from the third of these Four Points — to think fairly.

Cover Picture

'Buzby' was the main attraction at Mark III's recent fund raising fete which raised some £150 for their p'ay group.

Photo: Hackney Gazette

Personal View

'Any man's death diminisheth me, because I am involved in mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls: it tolls for thee.' John Donne

Last month, I wrote of the paradox central to the Christian life: we are persons with individual destinies, yet we cannot live fully without each other. I emphasised that each of us is unique and that all of us are different. Here, I want to stress the other half of the paradox and draw the two parts together.

It has been argued that the New Testament is all about 'community'. The synoptic gospels emphasise the 'Kingdom', St John elaborates the metaphor of the 'Vine' and its branches, St Paul the metaphor of the 'Body' and its members, or limbs. But extremes, both of thought and of action, are dangerous: heresy is the exaggeration of one aspect of a truth and *'if the clergyman's daughter drinks nothing but water, she's certain to finish on gin!'* We can and should avoid extremism. We are not forced to make our choice between total social conformism and utter anarchy. At the heart of the Christian tradition — and nowhere else — is the dual concept of universal brotherhood and the personal value and responsibility of each man. In my view, the Toc H grasp of this quite central fact is the key to the Movement's continuing significance.

For today we are in worse confusion than ever before. In medieval times, the Church was the community and every man had his place in it. (Sometimes men were sunk in it, but rarely without trace!) With the Reformation and the Puritan Revolution, the pendulum swung violently and each man faced his God alone. This swing was accompanied by the early growth of industrial capitalism, and social problems multiplied. Age old patterns of life changed radically. More and more men lived in huge, dirty, industrial towns. (The population of Manchester alone went from 90,000 to over 400,000 between 1801 and 1851). The state was forced to start to interfere in our personal lives, initially to limit the working hours of women and children and to regulate public health. New kinds of communities emerged and, in an age of exaggerated individualism, men were thrown into baffling new community experiences.

The problem of reconciling the worth and dignity of the individual with the demands of the changing community has not been solved. In England 100 years ago, we were up to our waists in the sludge of community problems: now, we are in it up to our necks. Of course, our body of scientific and technological knowledge has increased and been diffused more widely in society. But the more the sphere of light expands, the greater its area of contact with the surrounding darkness. Fortunately, we are not robots or 'social units', so *'the gates of the future are wide open'*.

Toc H will contribute to this future if we try to show in our lives how the Christian way can lead us out of the sludge. We are persons and unequal in everything except our worth as sons of God. We must love God and love our brothers as ourselves. Love of all — even our enemies — is the unique contribution of the Christian message. Real love and sharing have deep implications for us all. We may start to understand them when we stop talking about 'community' and ask again who our brother is and what love is. Love is an act of will that springs from our membership of the human family — it has nothing to do with nice, warm feelings. The mother of a son who has gone to the bad will go on loving him ie wishing him well, however unattractive his person and habits. Christ does not ask us to find our neighbour attractive or urge us to like the smell of his cooking. He requires us to will his good just as we will our own. We don't need to pretend that our brother is always a nice man with pleasing middle class habits. Perhaps he is a child murderer. We may dislike him. There may even be circumstances in which we have to kill him. But we must always will his good just as we will our own. This is not an easy command to keep but it is the central command and we must all go on trying. Success would mean a revolution. *'Christianity has not been tried and found wanting: it has been found difficult and left untried.'* (GKC)

At its best, Toc H grasps the whole Christian paradox. Our Four Points are the practical expression of personal and individual love for all our brothers. The more that our love shows itself in selfless service, the greater our personal, moral stature becomes. The more we think of ourselves and brood over our personal status, income and achievement, the less significant we become as persons. *'Great men never feel great: small men never feel small.'*

There are two elements in our make-up: the individual and the social. That is why, however much we may pray alone, we should sometimes pray together. At different times in our history, we have over emphasised one of these elements at the expense of the other. The strong pull that Toc H has for me is that it comes closer than anything else I have seen to demonstrating in everyday life the wonderful balance of the complete Christian paradox.

The Jacobean Route

by Megan John

Holidays! The magazine, television and newspapers overflow with ideas. They begin their campaign as soon as Christmas is over, with tempting offers and pictures of package holidays to the sun. Sun is the dominant note: we have become a nation of sun worshippers.

A far cry this from the package holiday when it was first instigated. Then it was called a pilgrimage. Today we seek rejuvenation of the body, our aim and souvenir a sun tan: then they sought the rejuvenation of the spiritual life, and their souvenir was a symbol of the shrine visited.

For Europe, to the great shrines of The Holy Land, Rome, Glastonbury and Walsingham, there was added Santiago de Compostella. This last became for that age as popular as the Costa del Sol is for ours. The pilgrims arrived in their millions. Its symbol was a scallop shell which was worn in the pilgrim's hat. They sported their scallop shell as we sport our sun tan and tee-shirt. There was a shell for each visit: the more shells, the more respect given the wearer. Some unscrupulous pedlars sold the shells at exorbitant prices to save the pilgrims making the journey which could take a year or more.

The way to the shrine of St James of Compostella begins at Puenta de la Teina in Navarre. There, the four pilgrim roads from France meet and become a single road — the great 'Jacobean Route' through Northern Spain. In Puenta de la Teina we can see the inspiring statue of St James where the weary pilgrim halted at a wayside church for prayer. His feet are bare, his habit is ragged, his long hair and beard unkempt. His staff and broad brimmed hat are similar to those worn by gypsies met along the way.

In the Bible the saint is one of the three in closest confidence of Jesus. He and his brother John were the twin sons of Zebedee, a family of noble origin from Jaffa, where their house is still shown to interested visitors. Their Mother, Salome, was ambitious and asked Jesus to give them high places in His Kingdom. From the Golden Legend we learn the history of St James' coming to Spain and his influence on that country. His first visit was hardly a success: he made only nine disciples. After his martyrdom at the hands of Herod Agrippa, two of the disciples brought his body back to Spain. While it rested on the seashore, waiting to be taken to its burial place, a man was carried out to sea on a horse. The horse

was drowned but the man was miraculously saved and emerged from the sea covered in scallop shells. This was the saint's first miracle and the shells became the symbol of his shrine.

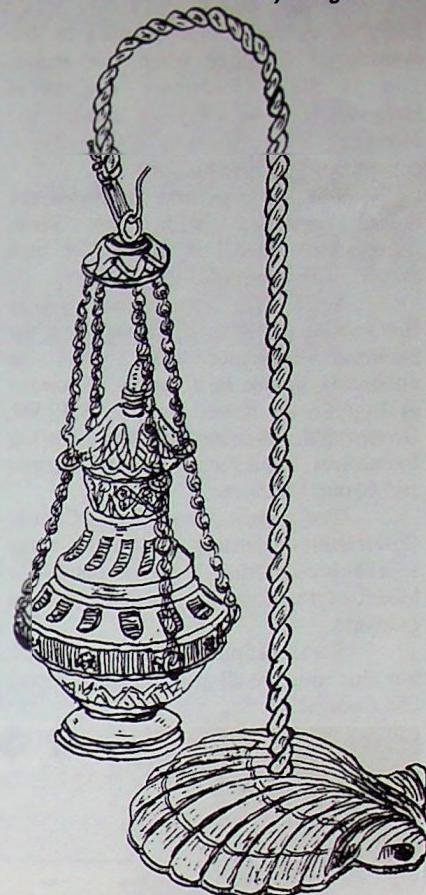
St James' body was buried in a field not far from the present Santiago, but during the 800 years of Moorish rule the sacred relics were lost. When Spain was at its lowest ebb and the relics of Mohammed were enshrined in one of the largest and most beautiful buildings of Islam at Cordoba, the small altar and chapel of St James were discovered. The discovery was made by hermits living around the town of Santiago. One of them, meditating late in the night, saw a bright star burning low over a field. Investigation revealed the shrine and Compostella (the starry field) was found.

The discovery caused a sensation not only in the West but among the Moors also. In these days we are inclined to discountenance the influence of a spiritual event or leader in time of war. We are more inclined to put our trust in arms, which makes it difficult to realise the full effect that the discovery of Santiago had on the Spanish and on a leader like Charlemagne. With hindsight it can be said that it brought about the conquest of the Moors in Spain.

The cult and popularity of Compostella rose to its height in the 12th century and lasted to the 15th century. On 2 November 1844 Pope Leo declared the Saint to be worthy of universal veneration, as well as Patron of Spain, and ended the attempts by some sections of the French and Spanish Church to demote and replace him.

The last section of the Jacobean Route is through a green countryside of little hills, bringing thoughts of romance and history — the stories of the great Charlemagne and the Song of Roland. It ends in a gentle descent into Santiago itself, a small town of narrow streets washed every day with a refreshing rain. Visitors are still called pilgrims, irrespective of their form of travel. The recommended accommodation is the Hostel de les Reyes Catolicos built by the great Royal couple Isabella and Ferdinand for poor pilgrims. Today it is a luxury hotel, equipped like a palace, the interior so large that the visitor has to be issued with a map on arrival.

Not far from the Hostel is the magnificent shrine. July 25, the feast day of Saint James, is its greatest day and an



experience in itself. The Cathedral is dark and cool after the bright light outdoors — impressive but far less ornate than one would expect in such an important Spanish Church. It has the same affect on some as St James, Spanish Place, in London.

On the morning of the feast, the 'botafumeiro' is brought from the chapter house. It takes eight men to move it. A charcoal fire is lit in this giant censer and then it is drawn up by ropes to the roof of the Cathedral. As it swings from one end of the roof to the other in a great arc, it leaves a cloud of incense. Should it fall (and it has been known to do so) it is supposed to denote ill fortune. For one person it certainly did, for it fell on the day when Catherine of Aragon, just before she left for England to marry Henry VIII, was one of the congregation.

In 1948 Pope Pius XII, broadcasting to a world in despair after the second world war, recalled the ancient rites of Compostella, saying that they were not of the past but were being made a reality of the present by the many visits of the young people of the present day.

It is a package tour *par excellence* and one must not leave without one's scallop shell!

"Where's George?"

Many of us asked that question on the evening of 11 May when the annual Toc H Staff Conference opened at Hengrave Hall, with George Barnett, the Movement's Chief Accountant, conspicuous by his absence.

Well, George was in Aylesbury being presented with the Scout Association's Medal of Merit — a high award, richly deserved.

Since May 1940, when George first joined the Scouts, he has given the Scouting Movement 33 years of unstinting service in a variety of roles — as Boy Scout, Rover Scout, ASM, SM, Group SM, member of two District Executives, Fund Raiser, Group Treasurer and Group Chairman.

The pictures show Bucks County Commissioner Bernard Frost with George at the presentation, and the handsome Medal of Merit resting on the certificate of award.

Some people have always said it, but this time we all join in saying, 'Good Old George!'

Photo: Scott Shaw

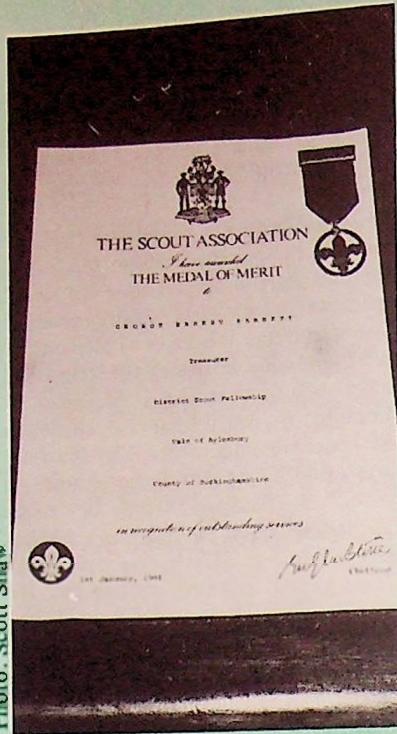


Photo: Kathleen Barnett

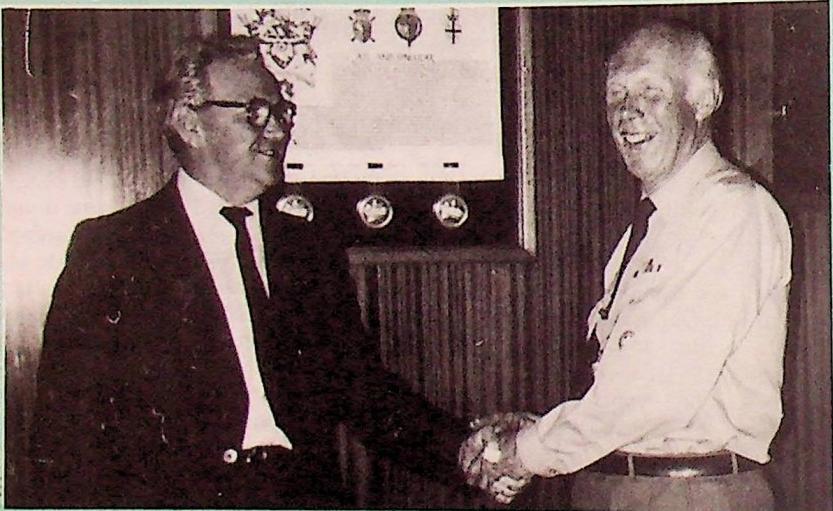


Photo: Thanet Times



Welcome

The following Branches elected new members during April and May:

- 3 — Pocklington (w)
- 2 — Denton (j), Hunstanton (w)
- 1 — Bakewell (j), Barton-on-Humber (j), Cam District, Caister-on-Sea (j), Cleveland District, Colwyn Bay(m), Gorleston (w), Great Harwood(m), Hemel Hempstead (m), Lindley(m), Paris (w), Plymstock (w), Shirley & Solihull (w), Stourbridge (j), Tunbridge Wells (w), Tyneside/Wearside District, Whetstone & Finchley (m), Winchester Flintstones (j) Group.

A warm welcome to 25 new members



The picture shows 70 year old S Devon District member Ron Tyler with Muriel Braddick. Muriel founded an organisation to make and distribute free cassettes with personal messages to disabled housebound people. Ron has long been associated with her in this work and has just completed a 30 mile sponsored walk in its aid. We don't yet know what he has raised but a similar walk by Ron last year produced a welcome £500.

The winning team (Minster) in this year's youth competition in the Thanet Indoor Cricket League display their trophy — The Toc H Cup.

"Help your clients to the help they need"



There are probably quite a number of people who could benefit from some of the helpful services provided by British Gas—but who are unaware of them. People like the elderly and disabled.

You could help them to the help they need by spreading the word more among your clients.

We will gladly provide you with explanatory leaflets about special help for disabled people, gas safety, easy payments and other helpful services we can offer. Just ring—or write to your local Home Service Adviser. You'll find the address and telephone number below.

SCOTTISH GAS

Chief Home Service Adviser,
Scottish Gas, Granton House,
4 Marine Drive,
Edinburgh, EH5 1YB.
Tel: 031-552 6271.

NORTHERN GAS

Regional Home Service Adviser,
Northern Gas, Norgas House,
P.O. Box 1GB, Killingworth,
Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE99 1GB.
Tel: (0632) 683000.

NORTH WEST GAS

Regional Home Service Adviser,
North West Gas, Welman House,
Altrincham, Cheshire, WA15 8AE.
Tel: (061) 928 6311.

NEGAS

Regional Home Service Adviser,
Negas, 5-7 New York Road, Leeds,
LS2 7PE. Tel: 0532 36291.

EMGAS

Regional Home Service Adviser,
Emgas, P.O. Box 145,
De Montfort Street, Leicester,
LE1 9DB. Tel: 0533 50022.

WEST MIDLANDS GAS

Regional Home Service Adviser,
West Midlands Gas, 5 Wharf Lane,
Solihull, West Midlands, B912JP.
Tel: 021-705 6888.

WALES GAS

Chief Home Service Adviser,
Wales Gas, Snelling House,
Bute Terrace, Cardiff, CF1 2UE.
Tel: (0222) 33131.

EASTERN GAS

Regional Home Service Adviser,
Eastern Gas, Star House,
Potters Bar, Herts, EN6 2PD.
Tel: 77 51151.

NORTH THAMES GAS

Chief Home Service Adviser,
North Thames Gas,
North Thames House, London Road,
Staines, Middx., TW18 4AE.
Tel: 81 61666.

SEGAS

Regional Home Service Adviser,
Segas, Katharine Street, Croydon,
CR9 1JU. Tel: 01-688 4466.

SOUTHERN GAS

Regional Home Service Adviser,
Southern Gas, P.O. Box 103,
St. Mary's Road, Southampton,
SO9 7GH. Tel: 0703 824124.

SOUTH WEST GAS

Regional Home Service Adviser,
South West Gas, Riverside,
Temple Street, Keynsham, Bristol,
BS18 1EQ. Tel: 027-56 61717.

BRITISH GAS HOME SERVICE DEPARTMENT

The Home Service Adviser,
The Home Economist, British Gas,
Marketing Division,
326 High Holborn, London,
WC1V 7PT. Tel: 01-242 0789.

BRITISH GAS



We will Remember...

We regret to announce the death of the following members:

In December

H C 'Bert' Dorow (Ryde)

In January

John Pollard (Sutton-on-Sea)

F M 'Fay' Masterton (Clacton-on-Sea)

In March

E 'Paddy' Carleton (Hemel Hempstead)
Frederick W Bullen (Coleorton)

In April

Mary Armitage (Huddersfield District)
A Alice Ball (Totnes)
Doris Brough (Morecambe)
A S 'Burkie' Burkinshaw (Goring-by-Sea)
Dorrie G Herbert (Llandudno Central)
Sue Peachment (Mid Norfolk District)
George Sewell (Rochdale)
Winifred M Southam (Malton)
J H 'Jack' Turner (Bebington)

In May

Ethel M Fox (Streatham)
Eric A Moss (Orpington)
Edith M Thompson (Taunton)

Scunthorpe (S Humberside) Joint Branch lost a founder member when Joseph Percival Marshall BEM died recently at the age of 93. Percy met Toc H during his WWI service with the Middlesex Regiment. He was always active in public life: he was a founder member of Scunthorpe Borough Council and, for several years, President of the town's Chamber of Trade. Percy joined the Special Constabulary in 1924, earning a long service medal with five bars and retiring in 1969 in the rank of Chief Inspector. Despite his many concerns, he was always ready to give his old Toc H Branch a hand when it was needed.

Canon John Webdell, a Norwich District member, died on 1 April at the age of 78. Born in Bermondsey, John met Toc H when, as a shipyard apprentice, he lived at Talbot House, Southampton. He went on to study at Leeds University and at the College of the Resurrection (Mirfield) and was ordained in St Paul's Cathedral. After five years as chaplain to a naval training school, he became Vicar of Old Lakenham where he retired ten years ago after 30 years of 'selfless ministry'. Last year he had the very high honour of becoming a Freeman of the City of London. John's gentleness and Toc H spirit came out in all he did and made him widely known and loved. He was a hospital visitor and school governor and an active Rotarian.

HSL

Sydney Burkinshaw ('Burkie') died in April. Burkie was a dedicated writer. He kept a diary meticulously from the age of 15 to the end; he wrote a fine history of Hounslow Branch ('To Build Bravely'); as recorded in last month's 'In Brief', he kept the log of Goring-by-Sea Men's Branch from his arrival in 1964 to 1981 - some 600 carefully typed pages. In Goring, Burkie was involved with the Friendship Centre, the Darby and Joan Club and Gifford House, a Queen Alexandra Hospital Home. For some 12 years, he was Secretary to the Wednesday Group at St Martin in the Fields and editor of 'Milestones', their newsletter aimed at keeping the group's members in touch with each other after their retirement. In writing to tell us of Burkie's death, his Branch says, 'Toc H has lost a great soul'.

George Dixon, who joined the Toc H staff in 1956 and retired from the post of Registrar in October 1977, died on 19 May. We all send our deep sympathy to his wife Madge. We plan to print a tribute to George in a later issue.

Jack Turner (Bebington Branch) died on 30 March after a long illness at the age of 68. Jack was a highly skilled metal worker but his lifelong interest was engraving on glass: since his retirement some four years ago, he taught metal work and glass engraving in an honorary capacity in local schools. His beautiful glass engravings raised many thousands of pounds for charity over the years. One of them (pictured in the November 1977 issue of Point Three) was a fine goblet presented to Her Majesty the Queen on the occasion of her Silver Jubilee by the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen. Another is in the proud possession of a girl interpreter in the USSR.

For almost two years, Jack had been unable to attend Branch meetings but members visited him regularly in his home and then in hospital. Despite his failing health, Jack enjoyed life and never complained. He was, they say, 'a wonderful man' who will be greatly missed.

We all send our warmest sympathy to Heather, Jack's wife, and to his daughter.

We give thanks for their lives

Lack of space has compelled us to hold over some obituary notices received. We hope to include these in future issues.

-Editor

For your diary

Getting to grips with Brandt

Cuddesdon House: 9-11 October 1981

This weekend seminar will take a closer look at our links with the Third World, in particular with problems of food and famine, trade and aid. The programme will include shared exercises and we shall be ably assisted by Oxfam's Education Department.

Total price for weekend - £17.00.

Applications to Mrs May Ellis, 5 Parkside House, 52 High Street, Wimbledon, London SW19 5AX. (Telephone: 01 946 2048).

Growing in understanding

As we grow in understanding of ourselves and others, so will our influence upon the development of a caring society increase. One area in which our understanding is often limited, is that of religious beliefs other than our own, and the effect they have upon the lives of those who hold them. Many misconceptions can be dispelled if we take the trouble to understand why people behave as they do.

In the friendly atmosphere of Cuddesdon House near Oxford, during the weekend 2-4 October 1981, we can learn more about the beliefs and attitude to life of Muslims and Buddhists. Our speakers will be:

Professor Hasan Askari

Venerable Bhikkhu Sumedho

All are welcome at the weekend, whether Toc H members or not, and from whatever religious background. The cost will be £17.

Applications with a £3 deposit, or request for further information, to: Tom Gulliver, 23 Barton Croft, Barton-on-Sea, New Milton, Hants. BH25 7BT. Tel: 0425 (New Milton) 611839.

From the Director

by Ken Prideaux-Brune



'Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen nineteen six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six; result misery'. Mr Micawber's economic theory is the one by which most of us have to govern our financial affairs. With a Movement such as Toc H, however, things are rather more complicated, and not merely because of the extra noughts on the end of figures. We have substantial assets, in the form of investments and property and by far the greatest part of our income comes from our investments. Inflation leads to an inevitable annual increase in our expenditure but it can also lead to an increase in the value of our capital, although not necessarily at the same rate.

Every year when the accounts are published the deficit seems to be even more frighteningly large than the year before. And yet, in some miraculous way,

this has not brought us the misery which Mr Micawber experienced. Rodney Broomfield, the Hon Treasurer, told the May meeting of the Central Executive that our deficits for the past ten years add up to a staggering figure of £711,000. And yet the balance sheet value of our assets has not gone down. In fact it has slightly increased — from £2.4 million in 1973, following the sale of 15 Trinity Square, to £2.5 million at the end of March this year. (It's only fair to add, just to complicate things a bit more, that like the pound in our own pockets, the monetary value of our assets has gone down because it won't buy as much as it would have bought in 1973).

It looks, then, as though, unlike Mr Micawber, we don't really need to worry all that much about our deficits. Our expenditure greatly exceeds our income but somehow we seem to be holding our own. Gloomy noises from the financiers are part of the normal ritual of Council meetings but they can be shrugged off by the rest of us, while we get on with the real business of Toc H.

The trouble is that there comes a point when Mr Micawber's economics begin to apply even to wealthy capitalists like us. I write this before last year's accounts have been completed so I don't know whether we reached this point last year. If not, we'll certainly reach it this year. This is the point when our deficit exceeds the increase in the value of our capital. When this happens our capital assets are of course reduced because a larger proportion has to be sold to meet the deficit. And as a result our income in the following year will be reduced. And so that year's deficit will be even bigger. And so on. It's a slippery slope which gets steeper the further we go.

In the view of the Finance Committee, we're very close to that slippery slope now. The Executive has begun considering what recommendations

it should put to this year's Central Council meeting. These discussions will continue this month and in September. I obviously must not try to anticipate what will finally emerge from them but the broad outline of the available options is clear enough.

Do we make substantial, and inevitably very painful, expenditure cuts? Can we realistically hope substantially to increase our income? That is not something that can be left to the Executive and the Finance Committee. It would involve us all. It could only be achieved if each one of us has the burning conviction about Toc H that would enable us to give more sacrificially and fund-raise more effectively. Or do we continue our present policy of spending what we feel it right to spend, in the belief that our resources are given to us to use and not to hoard, and in the faith that if we are seen to be meeting real needs new resources will be given to us? If we take that option it must be with our eyes open to the implications and not simply as the less immediately painful of the options open to us. And we need to be convinced about what expenditures are essential to ensure the future health of the Movement.

It will be clear from all this, I hope, that what the Executive is wrestling with are not simply financial questions which can safely be left to those who understand such things. It is not mathematics alone that will decide whether our Movement is headed towards happiness or towards misery. Our financial policy must not be dictated by an abstract consideration of the figures. It must be a response to our vision of the future of Toc H. That is the real challenge which is being put before us.

This debate, then, is a continuation of the debate which began with *The Way Forward*. That debate is not fundamentally about what 'they' are going to decide about the future. It is asking each one of us some probing and personal questions. Why did God create Toc H? Why am I in it? What is the commitment to which I am being led through it? What is my vision of the future for it? What is the Holy Spirit saying to me? The Executive has the responsibility for giving a lead but ultimately these are questions which all of us have to answer for ourselves. What we spend ought to be determined by our answers to questions such as these, not simply as a response to Mr Micawber or to the vagaries of the Stock Market.

This is a continuing discussion within the Executive. What recommendations will be put to Council I do not know. Your comments, either to the Editor for publication or privately to me, would be welcome. And please remember all this in your prayers.



Louth (Lincs) Men's Branch prepared and manned a stand in Rotary's 'Leisure in Louth' Exhibition earlier this year. Some 40 groups shared the two day exhibition which attracted more than 2,000 people and numerous enquiries.

PANNIKAMPATTI

by Elizabeth Davies

I have recently visited Pannikampatti in South India. I had been for six months in the north, in a drought area and the difference was striking. As dawn came, the train was lumbering through lands green with paddy fields and clusters of palm trees, banana and sugar cane plantations and village succeeding village. The train had left Madras at 10 pm on Sunday and would arrive in Tirichipalli at 7.30 pm on Monday. Such a long time for a 200 mile journey, because the railway is single track and up trains are routed to wait at certain junctions, for the down trains to pass them.

The hotel was a furlong from the station. (Everyone here speaks in terms of furlongs.) We were met by Professor Samuel of the local Toc H Branch. He helped us pile our luggage into a ricksha and we walked the short distance: it was not hot yet. Then, after a wash and a dosi and coffee in the restaurant adjoining the hotel, we met the driver of a car provided for us by Toc H to drive to Pannikampatti. We had items to buy before we set out — fruit and bread, a notebook, a water bottle and liquid. I also checked that I had my umbrella (for parasol), a small towel to mop up perspiration and some mosquito repellent. Mosquitoes, I believe, prefer blood rich in sugar — so westerners often get savagely bitten. Indians can escape altogether as their diet is sugar free.

It was now 11 am with the temperature well into the 90s. The driver steered carefully into a nearby bazaar and stopped just at the right spots so that we soon had our purchases. As we went out of the town at a calm, steady pace, I breathed a sigh of relief: I had had to use for six traumatic months twice daily, the local town buses. These have to compete, one company with another, for the available customers. As a result, the conductor harshly rushes the stream of passengers on to the bus and whistles the driver on while people are still clambering up the steps: on those pot-holed roads, swarming with pedestrians, bicycles, rickshas, bullock carts, motorbikes, cars, lorries and more buses, it's a nightmarish progress. The accident rate in Tamil Nadu is the highest in India and India's is the highest in the world.

Our route was mainly along the Canvey river — well wooded, with mango, banyan, tamarind and palm trees. We passed through several villages of thatched huts, until we came to a weir which had instruments measuring the flow of water. Here, there was a very

narrow metal bridge for engineers of the water board. Being on official business, we walked across this to the government rest house on the far side. This low, whitewashed bungalow stood embowered in palms on a concrete platform, right on the river bank, high above the pounding water. We looked in to see what space there was and what facilities. We calculated it could house about ten youngsters, lying on mats. (Was it suitable for young volunteers?)

Soon, we drove on again, noting the well farmed land on either side of the road. Except for an occasional bullock cart and once, a tractor, there was very little traffic. And so, at 12.25 pm, we crossed a shaky bridge over a canal and stopped. We had reached Pannikampatti. My two Indian Toc H colleagues (Madras and Bombay) had arranged this expedition to visit Doctor Wasan in his clinic to see how he was coping.

A bevy of children surrounded us as we got out of the car. The door of the clinic was open. The air was like a hot blast from an oven — over 100°F — so we gladly went up the steps and indoors. The children peeped around the door and, curiosity overcoming shyness, pushed to have a good look at us. They were well grown youngsters, with keen brown faces, wide smiles and perfect teeth.

A little later, Dr Wasan walked in. Mr Mike from Bombay had been busy buttering a sliced loaf — bought as a treat for me, a westerner. Dr Wasan a gentle, diffident person, first switched on the fan, then hurried behind the dividing curtain, clutching several green coconuts. He slashed at these with a machete knife and then returned offering us each a tumbler of fresh coconut juice. Then he disappeared again, scraped out the soft young coconut flesh and presented us each with some. Coconut has symbolic value for Indians — its inner white representing purity. The fruit is the traditional offering made at a festival. We had grapes, oranges and the buttered bread which we now shared. This light snack was all we could eat in such heat.

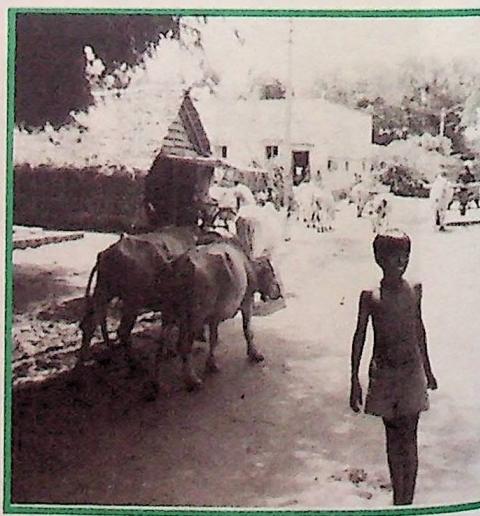
I had seen, by now, behind the curtain that there was a big stone receptacle for water in a corner and also a microscope. This he told us later he used for diagnosing polio and leprosy. In the part where we sat on a wooden bench, there was also a deal table, laden with bottles of medicine and small packets. Behind this stood a wardrobe type cupboard which had shelves inside.

As we talked, Dr Wasan commented happily on the fan, whirring nearby — a present from the UK. He said he worked here in the morning — but cycled over to a second village for an afternoon clinic from 2-5 pm. This had no fan and he found the heat exhausting. Later, we visited that building at 3 pm. It is a stucco building with a flat roof (only 2½" thick) to provide insulation. It was very hot! Dr Wasan explained that there were about 2,000 people in Pannikampatti and another 10,000 in his care in the neighbouring hamlets. They were all Hindu, he the only Christian. His wife, unable to live continuously in such village conditions, came to stay for short periods, but spent most of her time in Madras, caring for the grandchildren.

In the village, a male doctor is not acceptable to the women. Dr Wasan finds it a worry that the villagers do not allow him to visit women in labour, to give women injections, to minister to them in any way. He added that his people were on the whole healthy. They had enough to eat, because the nearby river provides enough water for irrigation.

A second concern was the high incidence of dysentery. This is the major disease amongst his people. He needs help with health education, with ante-natal and contraceptive information and, of course, instruction in the importance of clean hands, of pure water, of the need to boil water. The canal that runs to the village from the big river Canvey is used for every purpose — sewer, laundry and drinking water.

A third problem is that most of the village women work in the paddy fields all day. These are two miles away and Dr Wasan could see the need for a creche. At the moment, the mothers keep a



daughter back from school to look after the babies.

To help out in all these matters, he felt the need for all purpose female nurses or paramedicals. (One woman could not live on her own in these village conditions.) Dr Wasan spoke of violence against village women, committed by the landlord — too common an occurrence to be a matter for the police.

As we left the clinic, we crossed the sandy track to the car, parked in the shade of some palm trees. After visiting the second clinic, watched by sleepy villagers, sitting in the open doorways of their thatched huts or shops, we drove on to a piece of thorn and scrub land, on the outskirts of Pannikampatti, which has been presented to Toc H by the Government.

Dr Wasan and my two colleagues discussed the digging of a well on the site. I touched on the possibility of obtaining a solar energy pump, since diesel oil is so short. They then walked over to examine the actual site chosen — very fertile if it could be irrigated. Since the ground was too hot for me to walk on in my thin sandals, I stayed by the car, protected by a large umbrella. On their return, they discussed the need to fence the plot to keep out goats and bullocks. Already, the idea that a work camp of young Toc H volunteers should be invited to the village had been mooted by my two colleagues. The task of fencing the land could be the main occupation in a ten day project.

On our 25 mile drive back to Tirichipalli, we had to halt on the narrow track alongside the canal where a tractor was being loaded with sugar cane from an adjoining plantation. Women were the main workers in this backbreaking task.

The next evening in Tirichipalli, in a Toc H Branch meeting, we met Dr Wasan again. He had come over by the once a day bus. I noticed how worn was the western type jacket he had assumed for this visit to the town. We sat outside in

the glare of a strong street lamp, under the velvety star encrusted sky. Dr Wasan began by making practical suggestions about how the fencing of the land might be effected. He hoped the work camp would provide helpers for this fencing. He then began talking about the need to finance his medical care in the villages. He wanted to launch a scheme, where each family in exchange for one rupee a month (about 10p) could have free medical treatment when ill. Once the villagers had been visited and informed about the scheme — he wanted help from young volunteers who could speak Tamil — he would need regular monthly help in collecting the money. This Branch then promised to be responsible for providing food and arranging accommodation for the work camp: they discussed a date at the end of May 1981.

There was a reference made to the stucco building, that was to be put up in the village with Toc H money on the plot of land referred to earlier. This would house two helpers and provide a three bed ward, mainly for women in labour. The intention, I gathered, was to have the accommodation for the helpers completed in the next six months, so that the two nurses or paramedics could move in.

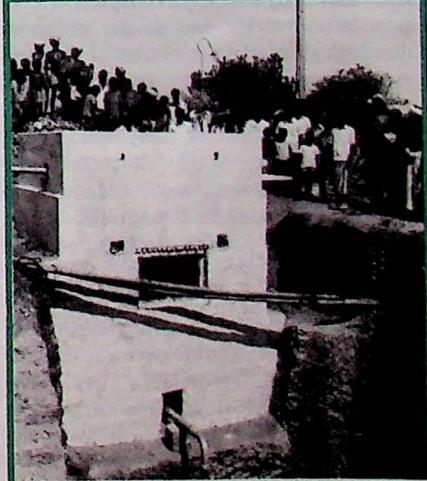
I was impressed by the calibre of this Toc H Branch: a high executive in Southern Railways is chairman and there are two university professors on the committee as well as one career woman.

The wife of the chairman offered to take me on the following day on a visit to a centre for the blind. This Rehabilitation Centre for blind women had been set up in 1975 by her father — Doctor Joseph, an eye surgeon, now in his eighties and partially paralysed. It was a great privilege to meet him and read of all the work he has done locally. This included a school for blind boys and a centre for blind men, as well as his life's work in the operating theatre. The local Toc H Branch has now made itself responsible for the direction of the women's centre.

We went through the training areas — weaving, spinning, basket making, cutting up paper with a guillotine to make envelopes, chalk making, the making of brushes, mats and many objects from the palmyra palm. I saw the garden where they worked, the kitchen where they were trained to find the different stores, to cut up the vegetables and finally to cook. I greeted each woman by touch and word, sometimes being understood in English.

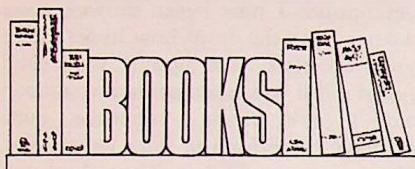
Then all the 30 or 40 blind women gathered in a big room, sitting gracefully on the floor, looking beautiful in their vivid saris. I spoke to them about my family and in particular about my father, blinded at 19 years of age, on the Somme. Sentence by sentence, my words were translated into Tamil. I described some of his activities, his training in St Dunstan's his ways of coping. He was an extremely active, energetic man. Somehow, quite informally, by touch and description, I now began showing some women near the front how to do simple yoga exercises. The upshot was that I found I had five eager, amused volunteers and I gave them a sequence, quite practical to perform in floor length saris. They were excited and vocal at the freedom this involved. Everyone was calling out. I asked each of the volunteers to help teach four or five others. At this point, the local social worker for the blind arrived and she clearly intended to carry on this activity.

To my delight, I was now given presents of basketry and incense, and around my neck a garland was hung, a symbol of their good wishes. This garland one is traditionally supposed to remove immediately after the ritual, to indicate one's humility and unworthiness. I do indeed feel humble at the extent of Toc H care and hospitality I have received in India. It was good to see a group of people of such courtesy and integrity in the Tirichipally Branch, supporting Dr Wasan so strongly and, in the near future, pledged to support the young volunteers.





Which is the odd one out? Mochdre (Clwyd) Joint Branch produced 25 knitters for a one hour sponsored knit-in in front of an audience of more than 60. Knitted blankets are for Pannikampatti and the money raised - well over £100 - is for their summer holiday fund for handicapped Gwynedd and Clwyd children.



Towards A Church of the Poor
Edited by Julio de Santa Ana

Published by World Council of Churches,
Geneva 1980. 210 pp

Theological oppression, the role of the Church in the liberation process, evangelisation of the poor, past, present and future roles of Church and State, are some of the themes in this scholarly global study, and are wide enough for a much larger book. The feat of compression and clarity of the text are a testament to the quality of the editing and the 15 authors representing the Church from countries in both hemispheres. The pace of the narrative the reader may find breathtaking and its contents disturbing in places.

The book arises from a three year 'action reflection' study of 'the Church and the Poor'. The 15 chapters are in turn compiled by one of the group of theological specialists. Some of them in various ways argue cogently that, although the poor have a foothold in the life of their churches, they tend to be treated as objects and relegated to the least important and most economically and racially oppressed positions - and kept there. Source references are abundant.

The writers maintain there have been a few significant improvements for the poor in the developing world in recent decades. Predictably they invite the Church to work towards a more just and participatory society wherever the Church happens to be - Hong Kong or Honolulu, South America or South

Africa. One of their main concerns, and rightly so, is that, contrary to the elitist Establishment view, the poor are not the problem, it is the wealthy and their agents.

I think this monograph will become a core work for theological study; it is, however, aimed at a wider generalist readership.

Paul Rogoff

'Have You Heard' published by 'Help The Aged' Education Department, 218 Upper Street, London N1. Price 60p.

This booklet has been produced in conjunction with The Greater London Association for Pre-Retirement, the London Voluntary Service Council and Legal and General Assurance Society.

Help The Aged's Education Director Susanna Johnston has said 'We cannot afford any longer to ignore the talents and energies of the country's ten million strong retired population'.

Every day 1,500 people retire. In all, over half a million people retire every year and they have never been fitter or more active.

'Have You Heard' introduces five retired people who describe how their lives changed through helping others. This is a well produced booklet and gives good advice to retired people on where to use their surplus energies and skills and give help to people while gaining enjoyment and great satisfaction.

There is much that Toc H Branches throughout the country are doing in this field, but there are some practical jobs that will interest retired people who are not attached to any organised charity. There are lists of various contacts with addresses and telephone numbers, and guidance on where to begin.

Arthur Noble

Pen Friends

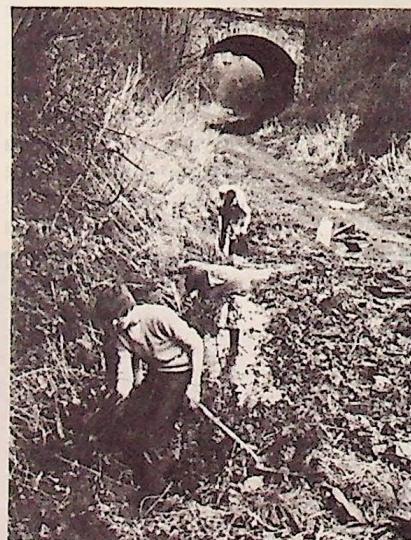
Have you got a son who would like a Belgian pen friend?

A Belgian schoolboy (age 13) wants to correspond with an English boy in about the same age group who has some Toc H connection. He lives in the village of Reningelst some 5 km south of Poperinge. During World War I this village was a Remount Depot supplying horses to units in the Ypres Salient.

If you want to take up this offer, the Editor will forward your first letter.



Kent's latest acquisition! In June's 'In Brief' column we told the success story of the Kent minibuses over the recent years. This one is a substantially modified Ford Transit and is already in full use.



Preparing a footpath and cycle track from Swindon Old Town to Toothill. This Swindon Cycling Club idea was taken up by Swindon District Toc H. LTV Bruce Harding, Anne Billingham ('Bike Club') and Gwen Poole (Wroughton Toc H) sold the idea to sixth form volunteers who have now worked two long weekends.

In Brief...

● Hagley (Worcs) Men's Branch recently invited the Aber Valley Male Voice Choir from S Wales to give a village concert. The village had a splendid musical evening, ranging from Wagner through Gounod to traditional songs and Welsh hymns. We were intrigued to note that each programme had with it a small embroidered Welsh daffodil to be worn during the evening! Branch members' wives provided an impressive buffet meal for the choir and served coffee to the audience during the interval. All profits were devoted to village charities.

● An interesting note from Denny (Stirlingshire) Joint Branch tells us of the success of their annual tea and entertainment for their local senior citizens — held this year in May and involving members in a good deal of planning and hard work. This year they took 150 people from the seven senior citizens' clubs in the area — about half the total club membership. The very popular entertainment was made up of Scottish songs and music presented by the Central Region Police Concert Party. During the evening, there were talks about Toc H and the presentation of a cup, a rose bowl and money prizes for the winners and runners-up in the old people's domino competition.

● Toc H in Fakenham, Norfolk recently ran a Charity Darts week in the showrooms of a local car main dealer to raise funds for Christian Aid Week. The competition ran from Monday to Saturday and local traders donated a glittering set of prizes — a dinner for two plus £10 for wine and travel, chrome kitchen stools, frozen foods, a transistor radio and various cash prizes and engraved trophies. The results were a week of fun for several hundred people, a lot of goodwill for Toc H and more than £215 for Christian Aid Week.

● For some years, Colwyn Bay (Clwyd) Men's Branch has been associated with the work of the Colwyn Youth Council. Members have helped with all the annual festivals and arts and hobbies exhibitions mounted in the Borough by the Youth Council. The Branch has presented the 'Toc H Shield' to be awarded annually by the Council to the winner of a competition of their choice. This year the shield went to 14 year old Melanie Borret of the Eirias High School for her contribution to the Speech and Drama Festival. Melanie took part in a dramatic scene, an original playlet and a mime besides coming first in an 'original poem' competition for children under 15.

● Skelmorlie and Wemyss Bay (Ayrshire) Joint Branch has just received a warm letter of thanks from the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association. Last year, a blind Branch member, John Blackstock, died at the early age of 53. In his memory, the Branch set out to raise the sum of £500 from one small village towards providing guide dogs. They succeeded in a very short time in reaching their goal — a quite magnificent achievement. Meanwhile, John's own guide dog, Raffles, is giving comfort and companionship to John's widow.

● We have had an interesting letter from Ken Asquith, Secretary of Newsome (W Yorks) Men's Branch, following their AGM. He reports almost 100% attendance (very good!) and the re-election en bloc of all Branch officers. (Has that happened anywhere else?) This is the 21st anniversary year of the Branch, celebrated with an informal open evening and a rededication and thanksgiving service in the Parish Church in which all friends in the District were invited to share. They have had an active and successful year but are a little concerned at their failure to attract new members. Very wisely, they say that this is a future, not a present problem, that they are busy planning their next year's work 'so let's take one step at a time and be satisfied with this'.

● St Albans (Herts) Women's Branch this year celebrated their 50th birthday with a gathering of members and friends. Their Branch Padre presided over a Thanksgiving Service with Branch members sharing the readings and the Branch Chairman taking Light. Some 130 sat down to a splendid meal, the table graced with a birthday cake beautifully iced with an impression of a gold Toc H lamp. Keith Rea, the Movement's International Secretary, spoke and was followed by a light entertainment provided by the 'Company of Ten' — a local amateur theatre group. The proceeds of the collection at the Thanksgiving Service and of a raffle held afterwards have been shared between the Old House and the training of young ordinands. As chairman Joan Ferneyhough says: '*What a wonderful way to meet old friends and to realise yet again what a great 'family' Toc H is!*'

● Pat Turner, Chairman of the young Bedford Group has written to tell us of the progress made with the new growth of Toc H in Bedford. The Group first met in May 1980 and was given its Rushlight in January 1981. In March this year, four of its members received full membership of the Movement at an Initiation Ceremony. The ceremony, of course, is optional and two of the new members

chose to take part while the others simply signed their membership cards. All four were given a warm welcome into the family. The Branch room (in the Friends Meeting House) was filled for the occasion, visitors including members from the Biggleswade Branches who had given so much help in the Group's early days. Two members of the SE Regional staff were there, as well as some of the youngsters who have helped with group jobs, a Sister from St Etheldreda's Children's Home (where the Bedford Group first met) and the Deputy Matron of a Sue Ryder Home (on the Group's regular visiting list). The Group now has seven full members, three probationers and one builder and can call on the active support of a number of young people in the area. They have a very full, varied and entertaining programme and each member aims to bring along one new person to the Group each time they meet. All of us here send our best wishes to this active and growing Group and look forward to the day when Bedford once more has a fully established Branch.

● One of many ways in which Northants District keeps its Branches in touch with each other is by mounting inter-Branch competitions. This year's choice was 'Give us a Clue'. As many as 14 hopeful teams entered the competition. The finals were held recently in Northampton with Wellingborough Men's Branch the winners and Rushden Pytchley Women's Branch runners-up. The finals, held on a Saturday evening, attracted more than 100 members and friends despite near blizzard conditions.



● In each of the past five years, Cromer (Norfolk) Men's Branch member Billy Daniels and his wife have held a fund raising effort in the garden of their tiny country cottage. Each occasion has been blessed with fine weather — even in 1981! The money raised has been used each year to provide 'Billy's Outing' for wheelchair patients of Cromer's Fletcher Hospital. Usually the outing has been a summer country coach tour, broken by tea in Norwich by a Norwich Women's Branch. This year, the party were taken to a pantomime with the cast headed by 'Benny' of Crossroads fame.

Over the years, these outings have become a regular event in the lives of those who are rarely able to leave their hospital wards. This year, they will have two outings since Billy's garden effort produced no less than £204 in two hours. Writing to tell us the story, Revd 'Finny' Findlow underlines that all this '*has been made possible through the hard work and compassion of Billy and his good wife*'.

Open Forum

Preaching and Practice

Two recent guest editorials in *Point Three*, 'Stocks and Shares' (May) and 'Whither the Church' (April) seem to me to be not only questionable in their content but also indicative of how far Toc H thinking has drifted away from practical concern for those who still represent the bulk of the membership, and upon whose presence on the ground much unsung community help still depends.

One cannot disagree with the exhortations of Huw Gibbs, but exhortation, for a great many Branches, is the sum total of what they can expect from the centre, and commitment to their welfare, as Christian instruments promoting in turn the welfare of the community around them, has been virtually absent where it should have been strongest — at the centre.

Many years on the Central Executive, and especially attendance at many Central Councils, brought home to me one sad conclusion: that real concern for the membership, and in particular the welfare of Branches, came very low in the order of priorities, if it was there at all. '*If a Branch is in difficulties, let it find its own way out, or die*' is not too strong a way of expressing all too prevalent an attitude. Loving widely, it seemed, did not extend to our own members in distress, and efforts to stimulate greater concern were unavailing.

From my earlier days in Toc H, less than 20 years ago, but still in the days of cohesive District Teams rather than unrepresentative District Executives, I remember such people as Mayne Elson and kindred spirits, for whom a Branch in difficulties was one to be revitalized by co-ordinated effort, not a 'bad' Branch to be left to die. There might be perfectly justified and pungently expressed criticisms of potential left unrealised, but there was also practical help to ensure it was realised. Such men of spirit will not be wearied by age, and will be remembered, but the years have been allowed to condemn much of the Movement they loved.

Had the central direction of Toc H been properly concerned with the need to maintain as high as possible a standard of help, many 'bad' Branches now no more might still be alive and 'good'. Instead, many areas, and much of London in particular, have for Toc H become empty deserts.

In my view, a main cause of lost ground has been not so much insistence on personal commitment, 'bad' Branches, and local competition, as a lack of central

commitment to trying to ensure that Branches should not needlessly perish, by exercising much greater care, and by manifesting real breadth of love through the kind of practical help which was once forthcoming.

Toc H thrived when it was truly an organisation almost wholly concerned with the welfare of the community locally, but the first essential was the effective maintenance of a local presence. It is this which ought always to have been a chief responsibility of the central direction of Toc H. Instead, it has been a responsibility increasingly neglected, and the centre has been too much concerned with matters which ought to have been considered as on the periphery of the main activity of Toc H which is to work on the ground in the local community.

It is perhaps a further sign of the preoccupation with matters outside what ought to be our main concern that the tendency to preach seems to have become a growing characteristic of articles in *Point Three*.

The Christian purpose of Toc H is to do the Will of God. In the furthering of that purpose, men and women of many Christian backgrounds gladly come together, and may be able to deepen their own faith by discussing their belief with others; as members of a Christian Movement, it is right that we should give thought to trying to understand better the spiritual realities which stand behind '*the ebb and flow of things temporal*'.

But it is not the purpose of Toc H to be or to become, as it were, another Christian sect, busy with formulating its own doctrine and making its own brand of would-be spiritual pronouncements. The general and wholly acceptable pronouncement in the Main Resolution is a sufficiently sure foundation for its existence. It is certainly not the purpose of Toc H to assume such roles as convener for gatherings to discuss religious teachings, as suggested by 'BD' Brown (April *Point Three*).

'BD' Brown thinks many will view what he says heretical. If in effect he is saying we should ignore the miraculous works of Christ, this is much closer to apostasy than heresy: '*Though ye believe Me not, believe the works . . .*' If miracles are hard to come by in our day, it is our want of faith which is at fault, as Our Lord very bluntly told his disciples on more than one occasion. Presumably the works of C S Lewis would not figure in 'BD' Brown's list of recommended reading in the search for deeper religious understanding, and Christ is not in his view *the Way*. It is ironic, if my opening assumption here is correct,

that in the house journal of a Movement concerned with doing the Will of God the doing of the Founder of Christianity should be so belittled.

It is also sad that anyone should harbour so jaundiced a view of the church; despite the grave misdeeds of certain of its past so-called members, it has nurtured many, many saints, has done much good, and since Christ's Ministry on earth has, on the whole, almost certainly been responsible, historically, for the greatest organised contribution to the welfare and advancement of mankind.

It is up to practising Christians as individuals, in their respective churches, or in no church, to uphold living Christian traditions by continually learning to apply Christian teaching and example to the world as it is today.

It is up to Toc H members to see to it that the direction of their Movement may once again be concentrated upon what most of them still see as the best way of upholding Christian teaching: to do the Will of God by their service to the community around them, and to promote His Kingdom by their example. *'Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the Will of My Father'*. Otherwise it may not be the unhappy 'bad' Branch alone that dies, but Toc H itself.

Jack Weber
Finchley, London

World Disarmament Campaign

Once again, *Point Three* has provoked discussion: it is good value at 10p a time. I am not happy, though, about the January issue. On page 4 there appears an item headed *World Disarmament Campaign*. The information is published in a form which makes the reader assume that Toc H has given its blessing to the petition. I would accept the article if published as an advertisement or a guest editorial. I am not prepared, however, to be known as a WDC supporter simply because I am a Toc H member.

A K B Ede
Exmouth

National Service

I was most interested in the Director's article in the April issue of *Point Three* regarding unemployment.

Several years ago, before unemployment was so widespread, I wrote to a newspaper suggesting that conscription for school leavers would be a good idea! I had in mind the 16 year old leavers particularly, many of whom had

no qualifications and found it rather difficult to get a job . . .

However, things have changed in the meantime. It seems that all school leavers, at whatever age, have difficulty in finding suitable work, and more than ever, I feel that 'conscription', for want of a better word, would be most appropriate and even more desirable than the gloomy prospect of work experience for most young people. Many of the countries in Europe still have a form of this, but for defence training. What I would strongly suggest is conscription for useful community work, both at home and overseas.

There are so many 'messy' parts in every town, where buildings have been left to rot and decay is everywhere, making playgrounds for small children hazardous places. Many open spaces could be made use of — landscaping — we all have plants to spare, organised play for schoolchildren on holidays. A pleasant open area, instead of a disused dirty area to be avoided could be transformed by the help of young people. Not only would they 'earn' their unemployment pay, but they would be gaining experience and perhaps have greater respect for the environment, which in turn might cause less vandalism.

Also, help could be given to the elderly and the handicapped, an area which many young people never see. I cannot see anything but good coming out of such a scheme.

Third world countries desperately need our help and support. Do most people realise that at present Oxfam have a campaign on about the baby bottle scandal? It is tragic that millions of babies are being fed by bottle (their mothers being persuaded it is better and the milk producing firms promoting this). They neither have the facilities for fresh water supplies nor the literacy to read the instructions of the milk tins, yet this, and many other things go on unnoticed almost. Children know only suffering and death through lack of education, lack of agricultural knowledge. There are many able young people who would make excellent teachers of simple hygiene or be able to help in farming or building, or even well digging 'know how'.

Many more ideas could be incorporated. Postings to various parts of the country, leave, instruction for keeping fit, social history of England, and even learning of the sacrifice others paid so they may enjoy freedom! I don't mean ramming all this down their necks, but it would not be a bad thing. Also, cooking and homemaking and clerical training . . . I could go on with the ideas. This would

not be another 'Hitler youth programme' but a gentle easing from school to work, with a year's service to one's country. Surely, not a bad thing?

'Keeping young people off the dole queues . . .', 'better care for those in need . . .', 'character training . . .' — I see nothing wrong with these ideas at all.

I do see possible areas of difficulty in organising and who should be in charge, but, should war be declared next month, I'm quite sure everything would be highly organised, and the money would be found! Why not for peace?

This scheme could be run on similar lines to the Forces. There should be pride not shame in serving one's country for peace. It would open new avenues for many, and create jobs for cooks, seamstresses — yes, even a uniform could be a possibility! Compare any men who have served in the Forces with those who did not. They stood up straight, they were taught some discipline. I do not envisage the sergeant major type of PT and drill to return — far from it!

Not all young people have the opportunity or home background which encourages joining worthwhile groups who help the handicapped etc. Some even scorn voluntary work; others haven't even thought about it. Give them a chance! A wonderful outlet to all the energy the young have, sometimes now used wrongly. But, where do we go from here? Not everyone has heard of Toc H. Although it is very real to its members, not always so to the general public, although the schemes for young people to help various concerns are excellent and I wish they were more widely known. I am not a member of Toc H but my husband is and I of course get involved to a certain extent.

Pearl Rumsey
Chatham

The Courage to be Toc H

Has not John Morgan (May issue) got things round the wrong way? (I have not read *The Way Forward* so I am unable to express an opinion on that.) Isn't it because we are *not* ashamed of our Christian basis that we express concern about any misconceptions or misunderstandings that might creep into our publications? Both inside as well as outside the Movement there are free church people, nonconformists and particularly the Society of Friends (Quakers) who surely resent any attempts to sway their religious beliefs the C of E way. There are those who believe that their version of Christian doctrine is the

only true one. Is it true as the zealots proclaim that spiritual salvation is limited to regular churchgoers, despite what our Lord said that he wished to draw all men unto him? Or is it plain spiritual arrogance? How do we know that nuclear physicists, atheists, agnostics, rationalists, free thinkers and other 'non-religious' folk do not secretly yearn for signs of some spiritual or other form of life in the 'hereafter'? I humbly suggest that J M's 'Movement of the Spirit' be directed as proposed by John Bowers in a previous issue towards the sincere followers of other Faiths and their definitions of religion. There is a vast field to be explored beyond the fringe of religious revivals, which are bedevilled by the false claims of those who seek to serve their own selfish ends of lust for power and dominance over others. It is the tragic events in Northern Ireland and the recent exposure of 'The Moonies' in the 'Daily Mail' that make the efforts of true religionists that much more difficult.

'Humble witness' is the last but by no means the least of the points of the Toc H compass. Toc H is comparatively small: its influence and quality of membership must be much greater. It is time we 'cut the cackle' and start to tackle the perilous problems that threaten our civilisation. It is later than we think. John Bowers suggests that some independent body like Toc H should take up this task. If that is the case why do we seem always to impress upon all and sundry that we are part and parcel of the established church? We could co-operate with scientific humanists to try to save humanity from its own devilish cleverness — and madness. To paraphrase what has already been proclaimed many times — the price of our salvation depends upon the eternal vigilance of true religionists with their belief in the deity, and of the scientists with their material proofs of what awaits us if we fail.

Len Prentis
Ruislip

Big Badges?

Returning home from one of the big Toc H occasions in London, I was sitting in an Underground train, when a lady sat opposite me and said 'I see you're one of us'. I was wearing a badge with our emblem 1 3/8" wide, and this is why she knew I was Toc H. I would like to suggest that our lapel badge be made 1" wide in future: the present one is too small.

James Harris
Loughton, Essex

'I Remember...'

by Allan Hunt

I was brought up in the village of Catterick in the North Riding of Yorkshire. Although the large military camp was only four miles away and the aerodrome only half a mile away, the village was then largely unspoiled. My father was very much involved in the life of the community and well respected. In 1938, a Toc H Group was started in the village and my father, having spent some time in the Ypres Salient in World War I and having visited the Old House during that time, became a member. One evening in May 1939, he came to see me and asked me if I could do something for him. One of the Toc H jobs was the care of the local War Memorial which was on a beautiful patch of grass, adjacent to the village green. Having committed himself to cut the grass around the Memorial, he found he had a parish council meeting the same night. If I would do the grass cutting for him there was a spare seat in a car going to a Darlington District Toc H Guest Night and I could have the seat. I agreed — delighted to be invited to a men's meeting at the age of 18.

The speaker at the guest night was Jim Burford, then Northern Area Secretary. Jim took as his theme the Main Resolution of Toc H. I can recall sitting there spellbound as he talked about '*the ebb and flow of things temporal*' and listening '*now and always for the voice of God*'. Needless to say he hooked me on

Toc H and I became a full member before I went in the Army.

Jim's latter point about listening for the voice of God came home to me a few weeks ago. After a District Meeting at Leatherhead, I was dropped at Woking Station with 20 minutes to wait for a train to Farnborough. My attention was drawn to two youths dressed in jeans, big boots and leather jackets with all the accoutrements. Worked into the back of the jacket were the words '*Destroy atom power not people*'. I was intrigued as to how the words were worked into the leather and I asked one of them. He told me, and said, '*Are you an anarchist?*' I replied '*No, but if you mean by destroying atom power you want to help rid the world of atom bombs I am with you. At the same time, used properly the world could gain a great deal from atom power.*' A wide discussion then ensued about using the world's resources including the use of the many young people who were unemployed. The train came in and as we got on I saw that one of the adornments on the jacket was a large letter 'A'. I asked what it meant and was told '*We are Anarchists.*' Between Woking and Farnborough we switched to this subject. It must have looked odd in a crowded carriage to see a rather elderly gentleman with hardly any hair holding a serious conversation with two lads whose hair had brilliant hues and stood out as

though charged with electricity. Through both discussions all I did was ask questions and add a few comments of my own. I did a lot of listening which was unusual for me. As I got up to get out of the train at Farnborough one of the youngsters said to me: '*Thank you for listening to us and it's been a pleasure to talk with an older person who would listen to us.*'

As I walked home from the station my mind went back over 40 years to Jim Burford and the phrase '*To listen now and always to the voice of God.*' I realised the things I should have done before I got off that train. Their names and addresses would have been useful. My name and address and a couple of leaflets about Toc H would not have come amiss. I wonder how many opportunities of contact are lost this way.

I remember a weekend at Dor Knap not many years ago. It was fine enough to sit out on the terrace on the Sunday morning after coffee and Colin Campbell was the speaker. He talked about opportunities that came along and were not taken up either because we did not realise their significance for Toc H or we were not listening. Colin ended by drawing a parallel between the disciples on the Road to Emmaus and the walk through life we were taking with Toc H. What would have happened if the disciples had not listened to the stranger or more importantly, had not gone and told the others? We ought always to be ready to listen and to act — not found wanting as I was. Next time I talk to strangers, I will remember, having listened, that Emmaus still has to be reached.



Residents of the Axbridge Cheshire Home receive a cheque from Shirehampton (Bristol) Men's Branch to cover the cost of a second 'talking book'. This is the latest of a series of gifts from the Branch who have a continuing interest in St Michael's.



Richmond (Surrey) Joint Branch gave a party in March for blind users of the Richmond Talking Newspaper and helpers in the scheme. More than 50 people shared this very happy event with a tea party and entertainment by 'The Serenaders'.

The Wider Family

Southern Africa

Alec Bullivant has sent us a report of a very special day at Botha's Hill. He says: 'April 25 was a red letter day in the history of Ethebeni at the commemoration service for Don McKenzie.'

The TB Settlement in the Valley of a Thousand Hills is now re-named 'The Don McKenzie Centre', and a memorial arch has been erected at the entrance, on which tributes to Don are inscribed in English and Zulu on plaques mounted on the supporting columns.

The plaques were unveiled by Alan Paton, who lived and worked with Don in the early days of the Settlement, and by Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, the First Minister of Kwa-Zulu, who flew down from Ulundi in the middle of a Parliamentary Session especially to participate in the proceedings. Both Alan and Gatsha Buthelezi paid moving tributes to Don in addresses to a packed gathering in the Settlement Chapel.

Cyril Maud, boyhood chum and lifelong friend of Don, acted as MC, and Padre Eddie Edwards led the Ceremony of Light.

Two hymns and two anthems, beautifully sung by a Zulu choir, emphasised the harmony that was evident throughout the afternoon as members and friends from all parts of Natal appreciated the opportunity of meeting each other, whilst patients and staff alike combined with the visitors in making this a day to be remembered.

It was indeed a proud occasion for Betty McKenzie and the brothers and sisters of Don that so many of his friends and fellow members, should, by their presence, show the esteem in which he was held, and their appreciation of a

lasting tribute to his outstanding achievement in the name of Toc H.
'We will remember him.'



Photos: Geray's Studio, Durban

These pictures were taken at 'Eleazar', the first and only sheltered workshop in Natal for coloured, crippled adults. After years of devoted effort by founder Mrs L J Hochstadter, the workshop was officially opened in October 1976 in buildings provided at a nominal rental by the Department of Community Development. At present it provides work in soft goods and carpentry for 25 adults who are brought in daily in a minibus provided by Toc H Natal Area. The aim is to help them to help themselves. They get a wage to supplement their disability grants, a daily hot meal and a weekly hamper of fresh fruit and vegetables. Above all, they are helped to feel useful and wanted members of the community. The complex is growing and it is hoped that before long the workers - who are presently scattered among various hostels and rooms - will have a home of their own on the site.

India

Mr J V Kuruvilla, President of Cochin Branch, feels that 'In these days of gross materialism, self love is a most prominent feature'. Cochin is an example of Toc H at its best - a true mixture of Christians where caste divisions have become irrelevant. To combat selfishness and materialism, the Branch has launched a remarkable Good Samaritan Scheme, with a strong Christian motive. They are asking adults and young people to give an hour every day to helping local families in a spirit of Christian service, including giving guidance in educational, medical or financial matters. Mr Kuruvilla tells us: 'We feel by spreading this work throughout each parish, we will be able to make the people in this country better in every way.'

Cochin is also trying to improve facilities in the Toc H Public School. Currently operating in rented premises, this truly public school will have its own classrooms, library and laboratory if the money can be found. The organisers have bought a five acre site and construction has started, although progress is slow because money is a problem.

Nevertheless, the organisers have a clear idea of their aims: *'Imparting sound education in a healthy atmosphere that will help children to grow up as pious and virtuous citizens, able and efficient, conscientious and dutiful.'*

Australia

Roy Nieper, Honorary Area Commissioner, Toc H, Queensland, is interested in having your used stamps. All proceeds from the sale of these stamps goes to the Toc H holiday home for the underprivileged and the handicapped on Bribie Island. The address is: Raoul Nieper, 5 Sheehy Street, Stafford, Q4053, Australia.

We hear from Melbourne of the continued progress of their Flashing Light Scheme for the elderly and infirm. To date more than 8,000 sets have been installed in Victoria and the demand increases daily. Toc H in Victoria remains very involved with their Holiday Camp for underprivileged children at Point Lonsdale. Last year some 4,000 children were given a seaside holiday there by 39 different organisations.

New Zealand

We have seen recently a newsletter from Philip Liner (Hon Commissioner of Toc H (NZ)), which amounts almost to an annual report. Among the many activities mentioned were Dunedin's continuing work with their old folks' club; Nelson's hospital broadcasting and film unit; Wellington and Tawa's involvement with a hostel for the elderly blind; Auckland's development of their own version of the flashing light system in close and happy co-operation with industry, business and other bodies. Philip emphasises that, wherever he goes, he finds 'Toc H stock high with the public and other organisations'.

50 YEARS AGO!

Extract from the Toc H Journal, recording the speech of the Prince of Wales at the Toc H Festival held at the Crystal Palace on 6-7 June 1931.

'It is almost a year and a half since the last gathering which I attended in the Albert Hall, and since then the keeping of the Birthday Festival has been handed over to the Areas in which Toc H at home is now divided. The process of decentralisation is now all but completed, with one most satisfactory result, that the Areas are strenuously tackling the problem of raising their own funds. Toc H has now a widespread responsibility, resting at last on local leadership discovered among its local membership. This is a great accomplishment, and home rule for the Areas, as this gathering shows, has been achieved without any loss of the united spirit.'

'Tonight is no occasion for an annual report of the work you have done or of the progress achieved. I will only make the briefest mention of one or two points. We have to acknowledge with gratitude the help that Lord Wakefield gave towards the reopening of Talbot House in Poperinghe. This is a very far reaching fact. That Old House has become history and still has a work to do in uniting men and sending them back determined to play their part more earnestly. There has been progress in the London Houses, a new House in Derby, and two more to follow in Leeds and Liverpool. The Leeds House is the completion of Lord Brotherton's generous gift to Yorkshire. The Liverpool House, in which Gladstone was born, has been given by Mr Henry Gladstone in memory of his father.'

'As regards jobs, two which Toc H is attempting are in an interesting stage. For many years a Hostel has been run in Southampton for sea going boys; many of them are homeless when they come ashore. This work has proved itself, and

has far outgrown the small premises hitherto available. A new site has been generously provided, and a substantial part of the cost of a new hostel. Toc H felt bound to go ahead and give orders for the new building to begin, but to complete it £5,000 is needed - not for Toc H, but for the boys whom Toc H is trying to serve. The other job is the boys' clubs in the mining district of Durham, where Toc H has for some time past run the camps for pit boys provided for by the Lord Mayor's Fund. I can tell you from my experience last summer when I visited one in Seaton Carew that these camps are extremely well run. I was very satisfied, and I know the boys are deriving both mental and physical advantage from this camp. The Pilgrim Trust has given £5,000 for this purpose, and I am sure that the Northern Area will administer this grant in a way worthy of the Trust's generosity, and will start these clubs based on the spirit of fellowship and service.'

'I would like to say a word about overseas. As you know, I have lately returned from a three months' visit to South America, and although I was not able to visit all the Branches of Toc H, I met a great number of their members and know from other people outside Toc H what fine work they are doing for a lot of young fellows from this country who go out there and do not quite know what to do with themselves when they have finished their day's work, or when they happen, for some unfortunate reason, to get out of a job. I understand that I am going to light two more Lamps tonight for South America. I also relit a Lamp in South America. It was in Rio during the revolution last year. The premises in which Toc H used to meet were in a Government building. This was

attacked and the Toc H lamp disappeared with a great many other things. However, they did manage to find the plate and one or two small parts of the original Lamp. These the chairman of the Branch wanted to present to me, but I suggested that they should put the original plate on top of the new Lamp and have a special plate made to say that this Lamp was relit in Rio. It is, of course, right that Toc H overseas should do what it can to pay for the staff that it needs. In some places abroad this is already an accomplished fact, but there are difficulties in putting it forward. A whole time staff must come first before the funds are raised locally. There is great need for a fund to provide whole time staffs overseas until the local Areas become strong enough to build up their own finances.'

'Now a word as to the future. Everyone knows that the times are difficult and everyone hopes that something can be done. The big main issue is to get people to realise that they must do that something. There is an Eastern proverb that runs something like this: "If every man would sweep his own doorstep the city would soon be clean". We must all pull our weight. It is no good sitting with folded hands waiting for things to get better. Nothing short of a team spirit can help us to meet our present problems with success. Toc H can play its part if it is not content just to remain another big society. It is, or ought to be, an influence in its own sphere and beyond its membership for stimulating slackness into energy, making those with whom it comes into contact larger minded, more alert, and more understanding towards the public problems of the country. If it works on the right lines it can manufacture character, the greatest of our exports, one without which we cannot get ahead. The way is not easy, but there were never greater opportunities for service, and as I light these new Lamps tonight I shall hope that what they stand for will be steadfastly maintained.'

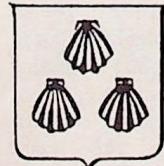
Small Ads

Small advertisements must be received (with remittance) five weeks before publication day, which is the 23rd of the preceding month. The charge is 5p a word (minimum 50p) to Point Three Magazine. Rates of display advertisements can be obtained from the Editorial Office, Toc H, 1 Forest Close, Wendover. Telephone: 0296 623911.

Raise funds quickly, easily. Superb ball-pens, combs, key fobs, diaries, etc gold stamped to your requirements. Details: Northern Novelties, Bradford BD1 3HE.

Christian Singles Holidays/Houseparties/Tours - Switzerland, Devon, Scotland, Sussex. Friendship contacts. Group activities. Nationwide. Christian Friendship Fellowship, Dept/B23, Edenthorpe, Doncaster. (sac).

Published by Toc H, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Bucks HP22 6BT and printed by The Chesham Press Ltd, Chesham, Bucks.



Bruges, Belgium. Hotel Jacobs, (established 50 years) welcomes Toc H parties and individual visitors to this lovely old city within easy reach of other famous cities of art, and of the coast. Comfortable, modernised hotel. Quiet situation. Parking. English spoken. Strongly recommended. Bed and breakfast only. Mr Jules Lietaert, Hotel Jacobs, Ballestraat 1, Bruges, 8000. Telephone: 010-32-50 3398 31/32.

Folkestone, The Adams Family offer you that comfort and service you deserve for your holiday. Comfortable rooms fully centrally heated, good home cooking and good fellowship, we're Toc H members of course. Groups, retreats, seminars, parties of 10 or more at special rates. Brochure and terms on request. Bright & Lil Adams, Claremont Private Hotel, Claremont Road, Folkestone, Kent. Tel. Folkestone (0303) 54897.

Caravan, Clacton. Toc H families welcome. 6 berth, fully equipped, 100 yards from sea, good facilities for children. Social club and heated swimming pool and shops. British Rail from Liverpool Street. Coaches from London to site. Local bus service. Season: 27 June-4 July, 4-11, 11-18 July; 5-12, 12-19, 19-26 Sept. £36 per week. Full details and map from Mrs Burgess, 6 Upper Park Road, Clacton, Essex. Tel: 0255 29428. SAE please.

Weymouth - Homely Guest House. Accommodation, bed and breakfast or bed, breakfast and evening meal. Access at all times. Reasonable rates. Reductions early/late season. Mrs Allen, 'Shankra', 124 Abbotsbury Road, Weymouth. Telephone: 0305 785467.

Weymouth - Bed, breakfast and evening meal. Open all year including Christmas. Winter weekend breaks from £14.50. Weeks from £44. Bar, free parking. Coach parties and children welcome. Mrs J Cole, Kirtleton House, 21 Kirtleton Avenue, Weymouth. Telephone: 0305 785296.